

Message Text

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42

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15

ACDA-19 TRSE-00 SAJ-01 MC-02 EB-11 COME-00 DRC-01

SIL-01 LAB-06 NIC-01 /143 W
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R 231538Z AUG 74

FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1827

SECDEF WASHDC

INFO AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

USNMR SHAPE

USCINCEUR

CJCS

SECUSAF

DIA

UNCLAS BRUSSELS 6417

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MASS, BE

SUBJECT: F-104 REPLACEMENT: LOCAL PRESS ITEMS

REF: BRUSSELS 6120

1. GENERALLY PRO-GOVERNMENT, FLEMISH LANGUAGE NEWS MAGAZINE,
KNACK, RAN FRANK DE MOOR ARTICLE AUG 21, WHICH IN EMBASSY
SUMMARY TRANSLATION STATED: DASSAULT HAD ARRANGED PACKAGE DEAL
WITH BELGIAN GOVERNMENT WHEREBY SABENA PURCHASE OF 10 BOEINGS
WOULD BE COMPENSATED BY BELGIAN PURCHASE OF THE ALREADY
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ACQUIRED 33 ALPHAJET TRAINERS AND BY MIRAGES TO REPLACE THE

BAF F-104S. RECENT DEVELOPMENTS CAST DOUBT ON VALIDITY OF THIS DEAL. MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS WARNED BELGIUM INNER CABINET (CMCES) IN MARCH 26 MEMO THAT F-104 REPLACEMENT SHOULD BE CONCLUDED WITHIN NATO. THIS WOULD EXCLUDE FRANCE AS WELL AS SWEDEN, THEREFORE, FRENCH PRESIDENT MIGHT RECONSIDER HIS POSITION TOWARD NATO IN ORDER TO ACCOMMODATE DASSAULT.

2. SOCIALIST PARTY DAILY LE PEUPLE ON AUGUST 22 REPORTED THAT BRITISH GUARDIAN ARTICLE SAID THAT F-104 REPLACEMENT NEGOTIATIONS HAD RESULTED IN COMPLETE DEADLOCK, AND FURTHER CARRIED FORMAL DUTH AND BELGIAN GOVERNMENT DENIALS OF DEADLOCK. "MINISTRY OF NATIONAL DEFENSE SPOKESMAN UNDERLINED ON WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON THAT THE GUARDIAN ARTICLE INFORMATION WAS 'FALSE' HE CONFIRMED THAT THE STEERING COMMITTEE MET TUESDAY AND WEDNESDAY IN BRUSSELS IN ORDER TO CONTINUE ITS WORK WITH A VIEW TO PREPARING A REPORT WHICH WOULD PERMIT THE MODS TO CHOOSE A REPLACEMENT AIRCRAFT JOINTLY." ARTICLE STRESSED AMOUNT OF MONEY INVOLVED AND THE EFFECT OF THE CHOICE ON THE AVIATION INDUSTRIES OF THE COUNTRIES CONCERNED." THE LABOR UNIONS ARE INTERESTED IN MAINTAINING EMPLOYMENT LEVELS AND EVEN THE FRENCH COMMUNIST CGT IS NOT UNINTERESTED IN THE SALE OF FRENCH PLANES ABROAD."

3. INFLUENTIAL CONSERVATIVE, CATHOLIC, LA LIBRE BELGIQUE CARRIED SIMILAR ARTICLE ON AUGUST 23 ON DENIAL OF GUARDIAN ALLEGATIONS AND SAID: " BELGIUM STRESSES PARTICULARLY THE ECONOMIC FACTOR AND THE FUTURE OF ITS AIRCRAFT INDUSTRY... THE SABCA(ONE OF BELGIUM'S TWO AIRCRAFT INDUSTRIES) CATHOLIC UNIONS HAS DISTRIBUTED A TRACT TO ITS MEMBERS NOTING THAT 7,000 WORKERS ARE ENGAGED IN THIS SECTOR, THAT EMPLOYMENT MUST BE PROTECTED AND THAT THE UNIONS AS WELL AS GOVERNMENT MINISTERS AND INDUSTRIES SHOULD HAVE A VOICE IN THE DECISION. WE HAVE NOW ENTERED THE FINAL STAGE OF THE EXPERT'S COMMITTEE'S WORK AND THE COMETING SELLERS ARE PREPARING THEIR LAST SHOTS. THE AMERICANS, FOR EXAMPLE, HAVE JUST MADE A SERIOUS EFFORT TO GET BACK TO THE FRENCH AND SWEDISH LEVELS OF ECONOMIC COMPENSATION. HOWEVER, THE EUROPEANS APPEAR TO OFFER A CERTAIN NUMBER OF MORE ADVANTAGEOUS GUARANTEES... THE MODS OF THE FOUR COUNTRIES WILL VISIT FRANCE AND THE US AT THE END OF THE SECOND WEEK OF SEPTEMBER PURSUANT TO INVITATIONS FROM MESSRES. SOUFFLET AND SCHLESINGER AT WHICH TIME THE VERY FINAL OFFERS WILL BE

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RECEIVED... DIPLOMATIC AND INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS MAY DECIDE THE ISSUE SHOULD THE TECHNICAL AND ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS BE ABOUT EQUAL."

RENNER

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NNN

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